

**Q&As from High School Innovation RFI Information Session
March 7, 2012**

GENERAL

Q: Regarding data analysis, can schools move away from numbers and provide more student testimonials?

A: We are interested in quantitative data (numbers).

Q: Would it be a good idea for schools to look at the criteria and rate themselves before submitting their RFI?

A: That is up to the school. The criteria and rating rubric evaluators will be using are all laid out in the RFI itself.

Q: Is there a separate funding stream for summer school?

A: Yes. There will be an RFI that comes out next year starting in the summer of 2013 open to both schools and CBOs. If summer school is one of the strategies you want to include, you may want to reference your intent to apply for the summer learning RFI. Schools can also propose funding summer learning in this round of RFIs.

Q: Can schools still ask questions after the information sessions?

A: Yes, you can submit questions via email to Sid Sidorowicz (Sid.Sidorowicz@seattle.gov) through March 30, 2012. All answers will be posted online at <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/education/funding.htm>

Q: Are there any other resources available to assist schools with their RFI submission?

A: Janet Blanford (high schools), Kristi Skanderup (middle schools and K-8s), and Susie Murphy (elementary schools) are all available to assist with the RFI submission process. They are all very familiar with the application and process and are available to provide technical assistance. None of them will be evaluating any of the RFI submissions.

DATA

Q: What is covered in the data reports that will be provided to schools, data on current 9th graders from last school year or data on last year's 9th graders?

A: The data that will be provided is the risk report distributed in late February/early March 2012 from REA. This report covers your current 9th graders and some data will be from last semester or further back. Attendance and discipline data should be from 1st semester of this school year.

Q: Will schools be provided trend data for students?

A: No, the data will be a snapshot using the last MSP taken.

Q: Our school has almost 100% turnover every year. In populations with that kind of automatic turnover, how will evaluators assess the performance data?

A: The outcomes are the outcomes regardless of turnover. Indicators are growth measures so looking at MAP or WELPA scores may make sense for your students.

OFE understands that with some schools, some students may not realize the outcomes until they have moved onto another school. OFE will work with those schools as we determine how best to measure outcomes in those situations.

Q: For the data analysis report showing the school's need, does OFE want schools to focus solely on 9th graders or, for example, on a school's math needs across the building?

A: OFE wants data focused on 9th grade. The 9th grade data, however, can highlight subsets of 9th graders.

Q: Given the 4-page limit on data analysis, can schools submit graphs and charts or do you just want hard numbers for any school-level reports that the school generates?

A: For school-level data, pick out key data points that show your school's need and reasoning for whatever strategies you are proposing.

Q: Can a school use data from prior years and prior schools for our current students to show improvement?

A: Yes, that is an example of school-level data that a school might want to submit.

Q: Are the ELL coaches able to help collect data or should schools be collecting that data (attendance data on 9th grade ELL students scoring a certain level on the WLPT II test)?

A: The ELL coaches should be able to provide basic data on ELL attendance and scores on WLPT II tests. More sophisticated data requests may require assistance from Mark Teoh and his team. We have requested REA add students' proficiency level, typical growth in Reading, and typical growth in Math to the risk reports.

BUDGET/FUNDING/CBOs

Q: How much should a school include about its overall budget, including other funding sources?

A: There is a place for other funding sources in the work plan. Schools should provide information on how they are leveraging resources to address key needs. For example, if there is a clear need for math interventions but a school is addressing that need through another funding source, please include the intervention and alternate funding source briefly in the work plan. A broad overview is sufficient.

Q: If a school is addressing a Key Component through other funding streams, is the school at a disadvantage for the RFI process?

A: No.

Q: If a school already works with a CBO that has been approved through the RFQ process, does a school need to also include them in their RFI budget? It seems like there is a big emphasis on CBOs – do schools have to allocate RFI funds to CBOs?

A: No and no. Schools should propose the best use of Levy funds in their RFI proposals. If a particular need is already being addressed through other resources, just mention it in the RFI application so evaluators know the need is being addressed.

Q: Is RFI funding for one year only?

A: We will have an RFI process every year for the duration of the Levy. If a school that is chosen in the first year continues to meet its Outcomes and Indicators, the school will continue to receive Levy funds for the duration of the Levy. OFE will try to work with a school that has not met its Outcomes and Indicators. However, if a school consistently fails to meet its Outcomes and Indicators, the school will be defunded and that funding will go to another school. We are looking for an excellent plan in the first year and then consistent and effective implementation resulting in intended Outcomes and Indicators.

Q: Can CBOs that have been approved through the RFQ process become an umbrella for organizations that have either not applied or not been approved through the RFQ process?

A: No. Levy funds can only go to CBOs that have been approved through the RFQ process. The only exception to this rule is any CBO receiving \$5,000 or less in total Levy funds (not just at one school) per year.

Q: Some of the CBOs that were not approved through the RFQ process are key partners in our schools. Is there any other way to include them?

A: CBOs that did not get approved through the RFQ process may not receive Levy funds (unless they meet the \$5,000 *de minimis* exception mentioned above.) CBOs that did not apply or were not approved in the RFQ process this year are encouraged to apply next year.

The goal is not to exclude organizations; the goal is to build capacity and improve achievement. OFE staff are planning to convene some discussions this summer to prepare for next year's RFQ process, debrief this year's experience, provide technical assistance about how to strengthen applications, and learn from successful CBOs about how they track results.

Q: How many CBOs were approved through the RFQ process?

A: We received over 160 RFQ submissions. Over 70 CBOs were approved through the RFQ process.

Q: Will the larger CBOs have pre-approval from Seattle Public Schools for a contract or will they need to go through the personal services contract process?

A: It will depend on the organization. OFE will contract directly with some CBOs. Other contracts will have to go through Seattle Public Schools. Seattle Public Schools has said that they will hold special contracting workshops once schools have been selected through the RFI process.

Q: How will Levy funds be flowing?

A: For the most part, Levy funds will be going from OFE to the schools.

Q: Can a school use its performance pay to contract out with an organization that has not been approved through the RFQ process?

A: Yes.

HIGH SCHOOL QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Q: How are 9th graders defined? Is it determined by credits accumulated or by cohort?

A: The Levy is mostly interested in first-time 9th graders but current funds have been used to work with repeat 9th graders.

Q: Previously, schools had to choose focus groups and then the focus went to the entire 9th grade. Are we back to focus groups?

A: No, we are looking at the entire 9th grade. Outcomes and indicators will be measured by the 9th grade group as a whole. In reaching your targets, however, you may be focusing on particular groups of 9th graders in your strategies. For example, if you want to increase your attendance rates from 55% to 65%, are there particular groups of 9th graders that you are focused on to reach that target?

Q: For the “students passing all core courses” indicator, does that mean earning credit or simply earning a D?

A: Passing courses with any grade.

Q: How do you define “drop-outs”? A number of our students will finish their schooling in a different country and there’s no way to track them.

A: Drop-outs is not one of the outcomes included in the RFI process. The focus is on cohort graduation rates and on-time graduation.

Q: For college and career readiness, should schools be describing how 9th and 10th graders will be doing student-led conferences or just 9th grade?

A: We are most interested in the structure for 9th grade and looking for a structure that could roll up to include 9th and 10th graders next year. The college and career readiness funds are intended to be phased in over the next few years. Schools are, of course, welcome to try and incorporate more than 9th grade in the first year, but the Levy's focus is on 9th graders in the first year of implementation. Evaluators will be looking at the structure proposed and whether it can be rolled up to include more cohorts.

Q: There seems to be emphasis on adult direction. Are you shying away from student leaders or students teaching/mentoring other students?

A: No.

Q: Can the extended in-school learning time be a zero period or a 7th period or must it be built within the structured school day?

A: Extended in-school learning time can take place at zero period or 7th period. We define extended in-school learning time as additional learning time taught by certificated staff.